

River Murray Flood Community Newsletter

Issue 1: Friday, February 17, 2023



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Message from the Community Recovery Coordinator

As the River Murray flood waters continue to recede we are increasingly turning our attention to the important work of clean up and recovery. Communities have been impacted in various ways but the State Government along with local governments are working tirelessly to ensure stakeholders are front and centre of this response. While river communities are resilient by nature the reality is a flood event of this magnitude has not occurred in South Australia for decades.

Preparatory work with the recovery team and various response agencies has been underway since the beginning of this generational event. While there is understandable angst in the community about the pace of recovery, every effort is being made to ensure safe and best-practice methods are followed. I

encourage people to remain patient and know that efforts are being made at a considerable pace. On a personal level I have made it a key priority to consult widely across the many regions impacted to ensure governments of all levels are provided with an accurate reflection of life on the ground.

I am also working with the Department of Environment and Water and the recovery team to assist communities, primary producers, shack owners, businesses and other impacted stakeholders deal with the time-sensitive issue of dewatering. These agencies will work with those impacted around floodplains to recover as soon as possible.

In the coming weeks and months there will be several opportunities for residents to participate in recovery community meetings. I encourage you to take up this offer to share your views and help tailor the response to your needs.

This will be the first of many River Murray Flood Community Newsletters. I encourage you to use the feedback link below to let us know what you would like covered in future editions. We hope to reflect your voices and be a source of truth and comfort as we navigate these turbulent times. By working together we can achieve a positive outcome and get back to enjoying life on our beautiful river once again.



Alex Zimmermann

Community Recovery Coordinator

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Outlining the flood recovery process

A state recovery effort of this magnitude requires a whole of government, whole of community approach. The Department of the Premier and Cabinet is coordinating the recovery program. A series of working groups have been established such as a First Nations Working Group, as well as others that focus on time sensitive tasks such as reconnecting power to properties and repairing the transport network. Various interest groups including shack owners and the agricultural sector feed key information to Alex Zimmermann, the Community Recovery Coordinator, who acts as a link between community, government departments and agencies.

Non-government organisations, volunteers and support agencies are also a key pillar of the recovery process and will continue to support river communities as water levels return to normal.

For the latest information on the River Murray flood recovery visit sa.gov.au/floods.

Recovery priorities

Local councils and communities are increasingly turning their attention to recovery efforts. There are several priorities being addressed including:

Dewatering & levees in the Lower Murray region

With the River Murray flood situation now moving into the recovery phase, the re-establishment of the levee network and dewatering process is the highest priority for producers in the Lower Murray region.

Whilst the planning process is already underway, recovery of the Lower Murray Reclaimed Irrigation Area will be a complex process to assess and undertake the works required.

It is recognised that each irrigation trust area has been impacted differently and as a result, the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) is meeting with impacted landholders and Trusts to determine their thoughts on what works may be required in the short term to repair the levee embankments. Once it is deemed safe to do so, DEW will then undertake on-ground inspections.

Until these inspections are completed, it is not possible to predict the exact nature of the works required, or when they will be completed. In the meantime, drones are being used to monitor water levels around government-owned levees and undertake initial inspections.

Dewatering will also be a long-term recovery activity and with waters still receding, it is still too difficult to determine the timeframe and what will be required for dewatering. However, the Department of Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA) is leading planning activities during this period to ensure that there are no significant delays once the required initial levee repair work is complete.

PIRSA will also work with industry and other State Government agencies to undertake an engagement process with Irrigation Trusts in the Lower Murray to determine the broader recovery requirements for each Trust. This will provide an opportunity for landholders impacted in this area to discuss local issues and options for de-watering.

Primary producers impacted by the River Murray flood are encouraged to access the Primary Producer Recovery Grants and the Primary Production Irrigation Grant along with other services. Information is available through the [PIRSA website](#) or calling 1800 931 314.

Access

The Department for Infrastructure and Transport is prioritising necessary repairs to State Government managed roads, including ferry access roads, as the water further recedes and is working closely with local councils to ensure locally managed roads can be re-opened as soon as possible.

Road users are reminded to obey all road signage, always drive to the conditions and never attempt to travel through flood waters. For the latest traffic information, including road closures and detours, please visit traffic.sa.gov.au.

The Department continues to provide regular updates on its [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages during the flood recovery - including details of any road and ferry re-openings, detours and safety advice.



Fight the bite

The stock of available Japanese encephalitis virus (JEV) vaccine in Australia, including South Australia, remains limited.

On Monday, 13 February the Chief Public Health Officer, Professor Nicola Spurrier, announced that the eligibility criteria will be expanded to people with a primary residence in the Local Government Areas of:

- Alexandrina Council
- Berri Barmera
- Mid Murray Council
- District Council of Loxton Waikerie
- Coorong District Council
- Rural City of Murray Bridge
- Southern Mallee
- Renmark Paringa Council
- Karoonda East Murray District Council
- Unincorporated areas next to the Murray River within the postcodes 5330, 5341, 5342, 5343, 5344 and 5345

People who own a secondary residence affected by the River Murray flood event, including dependents and other immediate family who reside with the owners, are eligible. There is insufficient vaccine to provide to people (family or friends) outside of those in the eligibility criteria who are considering entering the area to assist with flood clean up.

Those who were eligible under the previous requirements continue to be eligible. Click [here](#) for details.

It is important that everyone protects themselves against mosquito bites, even if vaccinated against JEV, as there are other mosquito borne viruses able to be transmitted in SA for which there is no vaccine. Click [here](#) for information on how to protect yourself against mosquito bites.



Statement from Professor Ian Overton Chief Executive of Green Industries SA

If your property has been impacted by flood water, please register for a free assessment and free waste and debris disposal. Assessments will look at the safety of the structure and hazards like asbestos and mould. The assessment will belong to the property owner, and it's up to the owner to decide who to share that assessment with. For anyone who is insured, speak to your insurance company and follow their advice. We still need people to register for waste and debris removal to access services and benefits from the government funded clean up.

No one wants to demolish a property that doesn't need to be demolished. That's not the focus of our work in the clean up and recovery. Our focus is to clean up the debris and get the River Murray region back to business as usual for residents, shack owners, farmers and local businesses.

My staff are working tirelessly planning services and programs and mapping the logistics of how we help the community recover from the flood impact.

Safety is of paramount importance. Hazards like asbestos, black mould and unsafe structures can put people's health at risk. Green Industries SA will cover all the costs for the removal and disposal of asbestos and debris affected by black mould.

If you haven't already registered or don't know your client ID you can call 1800 302 787 for more information.

Shack community representatives

Shack owners impacted by the River Murray flood event should be aware that there are several representatives who are able to assist you with your recovery efforts. Feel free to raise any issues you may have with your representative.

Teal Flat, Old Teal Flat, Rocky Point,
Lake Cartlet & Pellaring Flat

Contact Penny Halliday
pennyhalliday@hotmail.com

Younghusband Holdings, Caloote,
Baseby Reserve & Mannum

Contact Shayne Hennig
08 8297 0883 / 0414 821 645
shennig@hennig.com.au

Walker Flat, Sabaruma, Wongulla
Lagoon, Wongulla Landing, Marne
River, Kroehns Landing, Forster &
Scrubby Flat

Contact David Whitbread
0419 822 205
david@ddwhitbread.com.au

Blanchetown, Roonka and Castles
Landing, Riverbanks Estate,
Shacksite Reserve, McBeans Pound
& Paisley Island/Estate

Contact Jan Badcock
0407 973 799
jan.badcock@bigpond.com

Bowhill collective

Contact Shane McGrath
shane.oakville@gmail.com

Purnong, Purnong Landing
& Caurnamont

Contact Kris Sims
0412 773 022 / 0412 773 023
[krissims@midmurrayservices.com.a
u](mailto:krissims@midmurrayservices.com.au)

Beaumonts, Cadell, Murbko, Idyll
Acres, North West Bend, Naught
Naught, Freemans Landing & King's
Riverside Drive

Contact Craig Dickinson
0417 883 881
Blackgt@adam.com.au

Scott's Creek, Brenda Park, Pelican
Park, Wombat's Rest, Morphett's
Flat

Contact Jim Johnstone
0473 854 526
jimmyj5357@outlook.com
Adam Madrussani
0412 555 745
amadrussani@ahrens.com.au

Marks Landing, Big Bend Landing,
Greenways

Contact Tim Wachtel
0418 503 252
timwachtel@bigpond.com

Swan Reach, Punyelroo/South
Punyelroo, Lang's Landing & Nildotti

Contact Rocky Warren
0409 554 807
midmurrayliquidwaste@gmail.com

Houseboat Hirers Association

Contact George Bolton
george@bia.org.au

Flood recovery community meetings

Flood recovery community meetings organised by Alex Zimmermann will be held on a regular basis with speakers from a number of departments and agencies. This is also an opportunity to share your experiences. See below for the list of current scheduled meetings.

Wednesday, 22 February - Waikerie (Waikerie Bowling Club, 25 Sichler Street, Waikerie) **3pm to 5pm**

Friday, 24 February - Berri (Berri Town Hall, Wilson Street) **1pm to 3pm**

Friday, 24 February - Barmera (Bonney Theatre, Barwell Avenue) **10.30am to 12.30pm**

Saturday, 25 February - Blanchetown (location to be confirmed) **9am to 11am**

Future meetings are currently being organised and local communities will be informed as they are confirmed.

Light refreshments will be provided.

Upcoming SAPN community meetings

Communities eager to learn more about the reconnection process and to raise any questions or concerns are invited to attend a series of upcoming community meetings hosted by SA Power Networks.

Upcoming River Murray Community Info Hubs (10am to 3pm)

Tuesday, 21 February - Morgan (Morgan Activity Centre, 7 Third Street)

Wednesday, 22 February - Mannum (Mannum Leisure Centre, 51 Adelaide Road)

Thursday, 23 February - Murray Bridge (Diamond Park, West Terrace)

Tuesday, 28 February - Renmark (Parklands next to Renmark Club on Murray Avenue)

Wednesday, 1 March - Loxton (Library & Visitor Centre, 25A East Terrace)

Thursday, 2 March - Waikerie (Library & Visitor Centre, 1A Strangman Road)

Friday, 3 March - 11am to 2pm - Blanchetown (Blanchetown Hotel, 1 Egerton Street)

Tuesday, 7 March - Morgan (Morgan Activity Centre, 7 Third Street)

Wednesday, 8 March - Mannum (Mannum Leisure Centre, 51 Adelaide Road)

Thursday, 9 March - Murray Bridge (Diamond Park, West Terrace)

Keep an eye on upcoming newsletters for any changes to meeting schedules and for future events.

River tourism recovery interactive workshops

The South Australian Tourism Commission is hosting a series of river tourism recovery information workshops, with upcoming sessions scheduled for Renmark, Berri and Murray Bridge.

Thursday, 23 February - Renmark (Renmark Hotel, Murray Avenue) **9am to Noon**

Thursday, 23 February - Berri (Berri Hotel, Riverview Drive) **2pm to 5pm**

Friday, 24 February - Murray Bridge (Bridgeport Hotel, 2 Bridge Street) **11am to 2pm**

[Register now](#)

Key information sources

Recovering from a significant event such as a flood can be daunting and it can be difficult to know where to access accurate information. Below are several key sources that can help you know what to do during this time.

<https://www.sa.gov.au/topics/emergencies-and-safety/river-murray-flood>

<https://www.sapowernetworks.com.au/river-murray-flood-2022/>

https://pir.sa.gov.au/emergencies_and_recovery/storms_and_floods/river_murray_flood_2022

<https://www.greenindustries.sa.gov.au/flood-disaster-waste-management>

<https://www.environment.sa.gov.au/topics/flood>

Emotional support

Flood-affected communities are being provided with a range of support services to help recover from the financial, physical and emotional strain caused by the high water levels.

<https://www.sa.gov.au/topics/emergencies-and-safety/river-murray-flood/financial-assistance>

<https://www.wellbeingsa.sa.gov.au/looking-after-wellbeing-during-an-emergency-or-crisis>

<https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/public+health/flood+recovery>

Tell us what you think

Over the coming weeks and months we will continue to provide information on the River Murray flood recovery. Please use the link below to let us know what you would like to see in upcoming newsletters.

Feel free to share this newsletter with those interested in the River Murray flood recovery.

[Provide your feedback](#)

[Sign up for future newsletters](#)



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